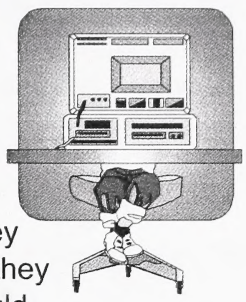


Breaking Down the BARRIERS

Alberta Transportation

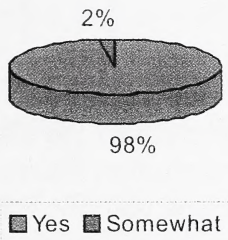
October 2003

Breaking Down the Barriers Newsletter Survey Results



Thank you to all who took the time to fill out the newsletter survey in the June, 2003 newsletter. The results will be very useful, as they will give Alberta Transportation ideas on issues that readers would like to see included in the future.

Are You Satisfied with the Newsletter?

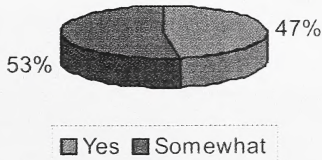


Approximately 98 per cent of those who responded to the survey are satisfied with the newsletter, with the other two per cent being somewhat satisfied. As for content, 88 per cent found the contents relevant and 10 per cent found the contents somewhat relevant. All respondents find the newsletter easy to obtain and read. In summary, the majority of readers

are happy with the newsletter and its format.

When asked "Do you find information in the newsletter that you cannot find elsewhere?", 47 per cent of respondents said "yes", while 53 per cent said "sometimes." This means that all respondents find new information in the newsletter that they were not aware of at least some of the time.

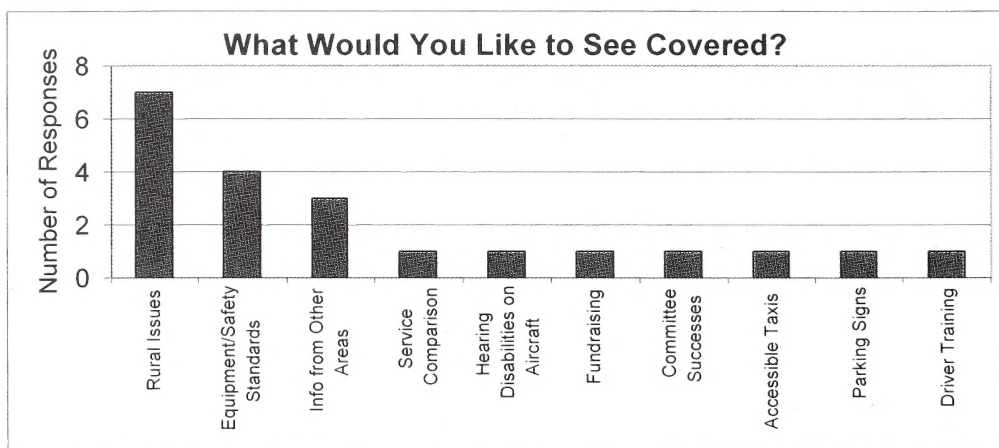
Do You Find Information in the Newsletter that You Cannot Find Elsewhere?



Also important in the survey were the sections on suggestions for future articles. The most common response was a desire for more articles on issues facing

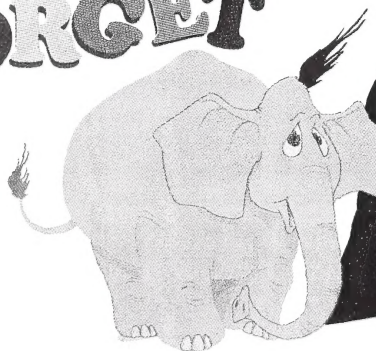
people with disabilities and transportation in rural areas. In response to this, Alberta Transportation will be including a section in every issue of *Breaking Down the Barriers*, starting with this issue, that asks for article contributions from individuals, communities and organizations on their experiences in accessible transportation in rural areas. Alberta Transportation will also try to include more articles on transportation issues relating to rural areas.

Other topics suggested for future issues include: information on equipment and safety standards; information and experiences in accessible transportation from areas outside of Alberta; Advisory Committee on Barrier Free Transportation activities; hearing disabilities on aircraft; fundraising information; accessible taxis; parking signs; and driver training.



Overall, the results of the survey indicate that *Breaking Down the Barriers* is fulfilling its mandate of providing information on transportation issues to people with disabilities and other interested organizations. Thank you once again for all of your responses.

**DON'T
FORGET**



To access
key information on
Barrier-Free initiatives,
please visit Alberta
Transportation's website
at www.trans.gov.ab.ca

Recommendations for Travel Agents and Airlines



The Canadian Transportation Agency (CTA) recognizes that good communication between travel agents and airlines is essential to the successful travel of people with disabilities. Sixty-six per cent of people with disabilities book their flights through a travel agent.

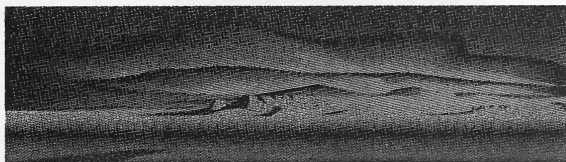
To encourage good communication between people with disabilities, travel agents, and air carriers, the CTA has made several recommendations:

- travel agents should be aware of an airline's policies and procedures for persons with disabilities;
- travel agents should have a clear understanding of a person's needs, using the CTA's Reservation Checklist – Air Travel as a tool;
- procedures for relaying a passenger's information between travel agents and air carriers should be as simple as possible;
- if the carrier is unsure of a person's needs related to his or her disability, it should request further information; and,
- travel agents should request confirmation of the measures the carrier will take to ensure the person's needs are met, and provide this to the passenger.

The CTA strongly encourages travel agents and air carriers to adopt these recommendations to ensure access to air transportation by people with disabilities.

For more information, including obtaining a copy of the CTA Checklist, please contact:

Canadian Transportation Agency
Phone: 1-888-222-2592
TTY: 1-800-669-5575
E-mail: cta.comment@cta-otc.gc.ca



PROFILE

Member of the Advisory Committee on Barrier Free Transportation



Chris Batty
General Manager, Central Region
Greyhound Canada Transportation Corp.

1. How did you become involved in transportation issues?

My interest in transportation began with a "summer job" while attending university in Regina. The summer job turned into a permanent position with Saskatchewan Transportation Company followed by a move to Greyhound Canada in the early '70s. Fortunately, opportunities for advancement and relocation became available and as my experience grew, so did my interest in transportation. Passengers operations have always been the focus of my positions and the accessible program became an essential part of our operation, providing improved service to our customers.

2. What is your role on the Barrier Free Committee and why did you become involved?

My role is to obtain a clear understanding of the present and future needs of people with disabilities, particularly as these needs relate to inter-city bus transportation. This information can then be used for improvements to buses, facilities, and employee training that will enhance the complete travel experience.

My involvement is partially due to difficulties encountered by my parents as they grew older. While this only scratched the surface of the issues faced on a daily basis by people with disabilities, it provided me with a significantly different point of view on this issue.

3. What are the major concerns or issues you have related to accessible transportation?

A major concern is how the inter-city bus industry can meet the service expectations of this important part of the traveling public. This includes convenient and comfortable travel in a dignified manner, as well as the internal operating procedures required to transport the various types of aids available to persons with disabilities. The Advisory Committee on Barrier Free Transportation creates an excellent forum for the discussion of these important concerns.

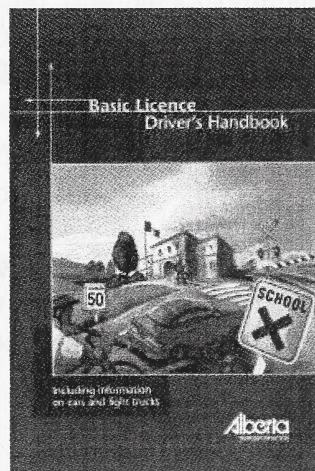
Did You Know?

Alberta Transportation has revised the Basic Licence Driver's Handbook. This handbook provides information on how to obtain a learner's licence or driver's licence for passenger vehicles, small trucks, vans, and recreational vehicles.

The handbook identifies and explains the meaning of the international mobility and TTY symbols. It also states that parking stalls marked with the international mobility symbol are only for the use of people with disabilities who use a valid parking placard.

For more information, please contact:

Gord Kijek
Manager, Traffic Safety Initiative,
Alberta Transportation
Phone: (780) 427-6776
E-mail: gord.kijek@gov.ab.ca
Website: www.trans.gov.ab.ca, under Drivers
Info/Traffic Safety, click Handbooks



Grande Prairie Accessible Transportation

As reported in the February 2003 issue of *Breaking Down the Barriers*, Grande Prairie Transit, the Disabled Transportation Society, Grande Spirit Foundation, and Peace Country Health in Grande Prairie are considering ways to coordinate their accessible transportation services and enhance efficiency. Grande Prairie received a grant from the Federation of Canadian Municipalities' (FCM) Green Fund to hire a consultant to undertake the study.

The city expects demand to grow as the population of seniors in Grande Prairie rises. The consultant recommends eliminating duplication of services by coordinating dispatch services, maintenance, and future capital purchases. This would enable the service providers to meet demand without expanding the capacity of the existing services.

The FCM's Green Fund supports municipal government actions to cut pollution, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and improve quality of life for residents.

For more information, please contact:

Karen Bustin
Transit Technician, City of Grande Prairie
Phone: (780) 538-0359
E-mail: kbustin@cityofgp.com

Did You Know?

Driving Force Vehicle Rentals, Sales and Leasing now has two accessible minivans available for daily and weekly rentals in Edmonton. The minivans can carry up to three wheelchairs. The Canadian Paraplegic Association helped Driving Force choose the vehicles to ensure that they meet the needs of people with disabilities.

For more information, please contact:

The Driving Force Vehicle Rentals, Sales and Leasing, Edmonton Office
Phone: (780) 483-9559
Toll-Free: 1-800-936-9353
Website: www.thedrivingforce.com



Improved Signage to Accommodate Older Drivers



If you are an older driver (typically defined as 65 and older), you probably noticed that your ability to detect and read a traffic sign has deteriorated over recent years. You are among two million older licensed drivers in Canada who are facing the same problem.

Alberta Transportation has recently completed a study through the Transportation Association of Canada (TAC), which reviewed the use of the guide signs with an emphasis on the needs of older drivers. The study examined several factors that affect the ability of older drivers to detect and read a traffic sign. These factors include increased glare sensitivity, decrease in visual acuity, and reduction in height vision.

The study provided recommendations on guide sign improvements to mitigate these adverse effects of the aging process. One of these improvements included adopting reduced legibility distance, a parameter that defines the letter size (i.e. the smaller the legibility distance the larger the letter size). Based on the reduced legibility distance of 4.6 metres for every 10 millimetres of letter height, the size of letters would generally increase by approximately 20 per cent. In addition, a minimum letter height of 150 millimetres was adopted for use on all guide signs along rural highways and on all street name signs. Other recommendations included increasing the brightness of a sign by providing higher reflectivity sheeting.

This year TAC's Traffic Operations Management and Standing Committee has approved the study recommendations. The proposed changes to the current national standards (i.e. reduced legibility distance, new charts indicating the revised letter height, and new reflectivity criteria) have been included in the Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices of Canada to serve as the guidelines for other provinces and territories.

The new national standards will now serve as the basis to review the practices for the use of guide signs in Alberta, a review that is likely to be initiated early next year.

For more information, please contact:

Beata Bielkiewicz
Alberta Transportation
Phone: (780) 415-4877
E-mail: beata.bielkiewicz@gov.ab.ca

Did You Know?

Alberta Community Development began the review of the Protection for Persons in Care Act (PPCA) in the fall of 2002. The PPCA promotes the safety of adults in care and requires that abuse be reported and investigated.

In March 2003, the *Report on the Review of the Protection for Persons in Care Act* was released and made 13 recommendations for changes to the PPCA. A questionnaire has now been released to identify levels of support for each of the recommendations. Completed questionnaires must be received by November 14, 2003.

For more information, and to obtain a copy of the report and questionnaire, please contact:

Protection for Persons in Care Legislative Review office

Phone: (780) 415-8617

E-mail: ppclegreview@gov.ab.ca

Website: www.cd.gov.ab.ca

Assistive Animals – Correction



An error was made in the article entitled "Assistive Animals" in the June 2003 issue of *Breaking Down the Barriers*.

The following sentence appeared:

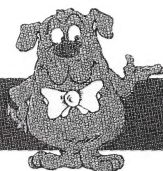
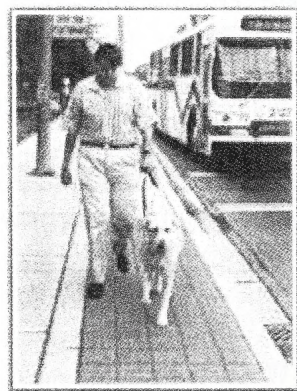
"Under the Blind Persons' Rights Act, transportation providers are required to

accommodate assistive dogs." It should have read

"Under the Alberta Human Rights, Citizenship, and

Multiculturalism Act, provincial transportation providers are required to

accommodate assistive animals." Thanks to the Canadian National Institute for the Blind for noticing this error. Alberta Transportation regrets any confusion this may have caused.



Did You Know?

A reminder that the Easter Seals Disability Travel Card is an identification card for people with permanent disabilities. It allows an adult attendant, capable of assisting the person with a disability, to travel at no cost and grants a reduced fare to people with disabilities who require an adult attendant.

The Disability Travel Card is recognized by VIA Rail, Greyhound Bus Lines (and their partners) and Acadian (Bus) Lines. The Easter Seals/March of Dimes National Council and their provincial members have provided identification to people with permanent disabilities for 26 years to allow attendants to travel free of charge.

For more information, please contact:

Heather Harrison

Alberta Easter Seals March of Dimes

Phone: (403) 235-5662

Website: www.esmod.ab.ca



Article Submissions Requested

Alberta Transportation welcomes articles on transportation that are of interest to people with disabilities, especially articles with a focus on rural issues. Articles may be from individuals, communities, or previously printed. Permission will be requested before articles are published. Please forward articles to:

Mike Bradley

Alberta Transportation

3rd Floor, Twin Atria Building

4999 - 98 Avenue

Edmonton AB T6B 2X3

Phone: (780) 415-1381

Fax: (780) 422-1070

E-mail: mike.bradley@gov.ab.ca

Breaking Down the Barriers is published by Alberta Transportation to provide information about transportation issues of interest to people with disabilities and related organizations. It is distributed to municipalities, service providers, provincial organizations and consumer groups in Alberta. To be added to the distribution list, please phone (780) 427-7944 or dial 310-0000 for a toll free connection outside Edmonton. The views and opinions expressed in **Breaking Down the Barriers** do not necessarily reflect those of the Editorial Board or Alberta Transportation. Any article in this publication may be reproduced, provided credit is given to the newsletter.

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